DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 412 632 EA 028 707

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TITLE SBDM in Restructured Schools: Organizational Conditions, Pedagogy and Student Learning. Final Deliverable for OERI.
INSTITUTION Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools, Madison, WI.; Wisconsin Center for Education Research, Madison.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 1996-08-00
NOTE 43p.
CONTRACT R117Q00005-94
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; Analysis of Variance; Elementary Secondary Education; *Governance; Leadership; *Participative Decision Making; *School Based Management; *School Organization; *School Restructuring; Teacher Empowerment

ABSTRACT

One of the most widespread restructuring reforms involves decentralizing decision making to schools and sharing decision making with a variety of groups. This paper presents findings of a study that examined the organizational conditions in schools using School-Based Decision Making (SBDM) where there is higher quality instruction and greater student learning. The study examined the variation in structures used for SBDM, the arenas for SBDM decision making, as well as the role of principals and others in this form of governance. It also examined how organizational features vary in SBDM schools, with an investigation of relationships among school size, complexity, gender of staff, sense of empowerment, professional community, goal consensus, power relations, and principal leadership. Finally, the study provides a picture of factors found in schools with higher levels of authentic pedagogy and student learning. Data were obtained from 24 public schools undergoing restructuring through an analysis of school profiles, questionnaires of over 900 teachers, site visits, observations of 144 teachers, an analysis of student work, interviews with teachers, and document analysis. Findings indicate that when schools choose to restructure, one of the most prevalent changes is the establishment of new, decentralized governance structures. These often consist of several common features, including school-level councils, a mix of participants, new arenas for decision making, and increased discretion over budget, curriculum, and personnel. Second, there is considerable variation in intermediate conditions such as teacher sense of empowerment and professional community. Third, SBDM alone is not associated with variation in instructional quality or student learning using measures of authentic pedagogy and learning. Fourth, SBDM alone does not seem to be a sufficient change to foster quality instruction and student learning. Three figures and four tables are included. (Contains 32 references.) (LMI)

ED 412 632

FINAL DELIVERABLE FOR OERI

SBDM in Restructured Schools: Organizational Conditions, Pedagogy and Student Learning

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August, 1996

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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This study was prepared at the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools, supported by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (Grant No. R117Q00005-94) and by the Wisconsin Center for Education Research, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of supporting agencies. The authors thank Fred Newmann, Mark Smylie, and Priscilla Wohlstetter for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper and Kubilay Gok for technical assistance. A draft of this paper was presented at the American Educational Research Association annual meeting in New York.

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Introduction

One of the most widespread restructuring reforms involves decentralizing decision making to schools and sharing decision making with a variety of groups (see Murphy and Beck, 1995). This new approach to governance and decision making has spread quickly to hundreds of schools in many different forms. It was seen as a central tenet of the restructuring of schools in order to improve the worklife of teachers and, ultimately, instruction and the learning of students.

The rationale behind this reform was the belief that schools will make more informed decisions about curriculum instruction, assessment and use of resources. In addition, it was believed that there would be an increase in the commitment to decisions by locating the decision making in schools and involving teachers, and in some cases parents, community members and students.

In this study we take a close look at the organizational conditions in schools using SBDM where there is higher quality instruction and greater student learning. While a number of researchers have studied the implementation of SBDM (see Murphy and Beck, 1994; and Smylie, 1994 for good reviews), presently few have examined empirically the ways features of SBDM and key organizational conditions vary in significantly restructuring schools. There are few studies that look at the ways some organizationally important properties such as school size and complexity, power relations within the school, goal consensus, sense of empowerment, professional community, and principal leadership are interrelated.

Specifically, we will examine the variation in structures used for SBDM, the arenas for SBDM decision making, as well as the role of principals and others in this form of governance. Second, we will examine how organizational features vary in SBDM schools, with an investigation of relationships between school size, complexity, gender of staff, sense of empowerment, professional community, goal consensus, power relations, and principal leadership. Finally, we will provide a picture of the complex array of factors found in schools with higher levels of authentic pedagogy and student learning.

Research Objectives

Guiding this study are research issues which focus on the interrelationship between school governance structures, principal leadership, and the aspects of school organization and power relations that may exert an influence on instructional quality and student academic performance (Marks & Louis, 1995; King, Louis, Marks & Peterson, 1995; Louis & Marks, 1995). We will answer such questions as:

1. What are the characteristics of SBDM in highly restructuring schools?

2. How are organizational factors interrelated in these schools?

3. What group of organizational features are found in schools where there is high quality authentic instruction and greater student learning?

In sum with this study, we examine the interrelationships of a number of organizational features in schools with SBDM and the distribution of these features in schools with more authentic pedagogy and higher student learning. A selected review of literature provides a background for understanding current knowledge about the importance of these variables.

Selected Review of Literature

Site based decision making (SBDM), one of the major reform efforts of the current school restructuring movement, involves decentralizing authority to key stakeholders in governance models often using collaborative decision making (Clune and White, 1988; Malen, Ogawa and Kranz, 1990). This approach can expand the base of decision makers to include teachers, parents and others. These transformed governance structures may increase local discretion over several arenas, including: curriculum and instruction, budget, and personnel. The goals of these transformed governance processes are to increase the commitment of local educators, to make decision making more democratic, to improve the quality of decisions, and ultimately, to improve teaching and learning (Malen, Ogawa and Kranz, 1990; Weiss, 1992; Wohlstetter and Odden, 1991).

SBDM is a form of governance and decision making that is posited to increase teacher's sense of empowerment, to provide the foundation for an improved sense of professional community, to foster higher quality instruction, and to produce improved student performance (Marks & Louis, 1995). It is argued that as districts grant teachers, administrators and others more autonomy over the resources of curriculum, budget, and personnel, improved organizational decision making will occur. This rather simplistic notion has not been supported by many studies. In fact, if SBDM is to be successful there may need to be a complex mix of factors in existence in schools.

REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

Introduction.

Given the number of studies, it is not possible to do a complete review of the research, both due to its extent and the number of new studies. Nonetheless we will

point to some central conceptual issues and substantive findings that inform this study. There have been a number of studies of the implementation of decentralization and shared decision making. Though none specifically examined SBDM with the particular set of factors we are considering, a number of the studies provide useful background.

Features of SBDM

Both policy makers and researchers have suggested the structures that SBDM might include when it is implemented (Malen, Ogawa, and Kranz, 1990). These structures include establishment of school level decision making structures such as councils, inclusion of staff and parents in decisions, and devolution of decisions over curriculum and instruction, budget, and staffing. Prior studies have found many of these in place (Malen, Ogawa, and Kranz, 1990).

Scope and Arenas of Decision Making

SBDM involves the decentralization of decisions in several areas. What arenas of discretion were most impacted by site-based decision making? Clune and White (1988) found that decentralized budgeting was the most readily transferred authority, followed by personnel, curriculum. David (1994) noted that even though there was an increase in decision making related to personnel, budget, and scheduling, council meetings were still primarily focusing on issues related to discipline, extracurricular activities, and facilities. Murphy and Beck (1995) measured the influence garnered at school sites by assessing the three arenas where teachers were involved in decision making and the degree of power exercised over those arenas (p.75). In the Robertson, Wohlstetter and Mohrman (1994) study, schools "faced some significant constraints in terms of authority . . . in the areas of personnel and budget" (p.22). Wohlstetter, Smyer, and Mohrman (1994) noted that a "minimum threshold of authority -- focused on factors that affect teaching" was needed for a school to restructure successfully. In their study, schools "had significant authority over a lump sum budget, . . . to some extent controlled the mix of staff positions; and . . . could make operational decisions about curriculum delivery" (p. 17). In practice, patterns of decentralization of authority were inconsistent across sites.

Participation in SBDM decisions by teachers may vary across these three decision arenas. Conley (1991) found that teacher's "express greater expectations for and desire to participate in decisions related to classroom instruction. They express lower expectations for and desire to participate in administrative and

managerial decisions" (cited in Smylie, 1992). Smylie (1992) similarly found that teachers were more likely to participate in curricular, instructional, and staff development decisions than in personnel or other general administrative decisions.

Even though teachers express a desire to participate in the decision making process, that involvement may be limited if they do not feel they are actually empowered to decide, if the professional community and culture is weak, or if goals are not shared (Guskey and Peterson, 1995).

SBDM and Organizational Features

SBDM is an organizational reform whose effectiveness might be influenced by the nature of the school organization and context. Similarly, the school organizational features may be shaped by SBDM. No doubt the relationship is in both directions, though organizational theorists (see Mintzberg, 1979 and Bolman and Deal, 1990 for reviews) convincingly argue that some features may shape the impact of structural reforms.

Site Based Decision Making and Sense of Empowerment

A number of reformers in the early 1990s sought to improve schools by increasing the professionalism of teachers and "empower" them by allowing staff more discretion in decision making. While teachers' sense of empowerment may foster commitment, a sense of collegiality, and job satisfaction, without a focus on instruction and opportunities for professional collaboration, it may not foster improved instruction or higher student learning (Marks and Louis, 1995). According to Shields, P.M., Anderson, L., Bamburg, J.D., Hawkins, E. F., Knapp, M.S., Ruskus, J., and Wilson, C. L. (1992), "The establishment of a set of conditions that cause a staff to believe that they can raise any issue that affects the school's ability to carry out its mission is a significant step toward empowering teachers." (p. 71). Shield's and associates went on to state: "Teachers and principals who perceived a connection between shared governance and their ability to affect decisions about curriculum and instruction were much more willing to invest time and energy in shared decision making than were principals and teachers who did not see a connection" (p. 71). Other studies have found empowerment to have an indirect effect on instructional quality and learning, and then often only when other school factors such as shared instructional goals and collaboration were evident (David, 1994; Smylie, 1994).

Site-Based Decision Making and Professional Community

The underlying norms, values, and beliefs of a school, its organizational culture and professional community, are powerful decision shaping features of a school (Deal and Peterson, 1990; Louis, Marks and Kruse, 1995). The professional community of the school may either enhance or inhibit the implementation of SBDM for instructional improvement or student learning. "Professional community", according to Louis, Marks and Kruse (1995), is characterized as having several attributes: (1) a shared sense of purpose, (2) collaborative activity, (3) collective responsibility, (4) collective focus on student learning, (5) deprivatized practice, and (6) reflective dialogue.

Professional community may be crucial in the restructuring process, because it can promote a sustained collective effort when there is a shared sense of purpose. In SBDM schools, professional community may foster a greater sense of empowerment as teachers feel they have opportunities to act on their goals. Decentralized decision making may shape professional community in schools because staff have structures in which to work on shared problems of practice and discretion over resources to apply to those problems. It may be the case that professional community and sense of empowerment may be mutually reinforcing within SBDM settings.

School Size

Much research has shown that organizational size is often related to variation in organization features and processes (See Bolman and Deal, 1990 and Mintzberg, 1979 for a discussion of this literature). As organizations increase in size they tend to increase the centralization of decision making, the formalization of rules and procedures and the power of the hierarchy. It is not unreasonable to assume that school size may also impact these structures and processes as well. We might expect larger schools to be different in how they implement and use SBDM and the nature of power and authority in the school.

School Complexity

Organizational research has also found that complexity, the degree of elaboration of roles, units, or functions, is related to the use of power, control, and decision making (Mintzberg, 1979). High schools tend to be more complex than

elementary schools, for example. Small schools have also been found to foster greater community. Unfortunately, studies of SBDM seldom specify the effects of complexity on organizational conditions such as professional community or on student learning (Smylie, Lazarus, & Brownlee-Conyers, 1995; Weiss & Cambone, 1994).

Staff Gender

While there is considerable research on the relationship between gender of the principal and instructional leadership (see Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan and Lee, 1982), few studies have examined the staff gender composition as a feature that may shape the nature of power, decision making or the implementation of educational reforms. Nonetheless, SBDM may foster greater staff leadership opportunities, and as women are found to be potentially stronger instructional leaders, increased number of women in schools with shared power relations may be more successful in providing high quality instruction and improved student learning.

Goal Consensus

Schools, like other organizations are in part designed to achieve specified goals. While there is always some disagreement on what the goals of schools should be, the degree to which the mission and goals of a school are shared, the degree of goal consensus, has been found to be related to more effectiveness, successful improvement, and stronger commitment (see Deal and Peterson, 1994). With greater goal consensus staff and administrators are more likely to apply time, energy and resources toward the same ends. Likewise, with greater goal consensus, SBDM is more likely to be focusing decision making on those same ends. Schools with shared goals may make SBDM more effective.

School Power Relations

For decades there has been studies that look at power in organizations. From the early writings of theorists such as Taylor, Gulick, and Follette, researchers have been concerned with issues of decision making and power. While early work often focused on the ways superiors maintained authority, more recently writers have been concerned with the ways power is shared to enhance organizational success (King, M.B., Louis, K.S., Marks, H.M. & Peterson, K.D., In press; Lawler,1992). Drawing from this more recent traditions, we examine power relations, that is the distribution

of power, among administrators and staff in SBDM schools.

Research on power relations focuses on how power is used and the ways it is distributed or shared within organizations. Murphy and Beck (1995) argue that new decision making practices will change power relationships. They suggest that by altering governance structures actual changes in influence or power will occur.

Principals are not always interested in sharing power with the advent of SBDM. Wohlstetter & Odden (1991) found that reconfigured governance structures made principals feel their power was threatened and some sought to maintain power. Teachers may also feel that the status quo is threatened (Duttweiller & Mutchler, 1990) (cited in Murphy and Beck, 1995). Duttweiller and Mutchler paint a picture of principals reluctant to relinquish power and teachers who either think SBDM a passing fad or who are comfortable with the existing distribution of power in the school.

Power relations in schools may influence the motivation and work of decision makers. Where power is shared, participants in decision making may be more likely to be committed to the decision, follow though on plans, and feel their involvement legitimate. Where power is tightly held by an individual (the principal often) or by small coalitions, conflict, balkanization, and politicization of actions may occur (Bolman and Deal, 1990).

Power relations may vary when schools institute SBDM. But few studies have looked at variation in power relations in SBDM schools. Power may simply be transferred from central office to the principal (and remain consolidated there) or power can be shared among teachers or with teachers and administrators (a form of shared power). Wohlstetter and Odden (1991) found that in the schools where SBM was successful "power was dispersed throughout the school .[and] . . nearly all faculty members . . . participated in SBM" (p. 3).

In this study we build on the work of King, Louis, Marks and Peterson, (forthcoming) describing the variation of power relations in schools. They argue that there were four types of power relations: consolidated in either the principalship or a small group, or shared among teachers or among teachers and administrators. Variability in these power relations may be associated with variation in the enactment of SBDM and its effects on a variety of organizational conditions.

Principal Leadership

Principal leadership has been found to be key to the effectiveness of schools.

Wohlstetter and Odden (1991) found that in the schools where SBM worked there were "strong principal leaders . . .who led by creating ownership in a common vision" (p. 13). According to Wohlstetter and Mohrman (1993), there are indications that a strong leader is needed, as well as a mechanism that directs decision making toward the improvement of "curriculum, teaching and day-to-day operations" (p. xx). Effective principals were able to motivate and guide their staff around a vision and create an environment where a team feeling prospered (Wohlstetter, Smyer, & Mohrman, 1994). That is, in more effective schools using SBDM, principal leadership may motivate staff, encourage attainment of educational goals, and support changes.

School leadership may also be a factor in fostering professional community. Louis, Marks and Kruse (1995) found leadership a crucial element in "emerging professional communities" as leaders provided "meaningful *opportunities for teachers to come together across subgroups* to work on issues of concern for all" (p. 19). Without leadership, often from the principal, opportunities to work together may not have occurred.

SBDM, Instruction and Student Learning

Most studies that examined the relationship between SBDM and student outcomes found little or no relationship between SBDM and student learning (see Murphy and Beck, 1995 for an excellent review). A few did find a relationship.

David (1994) looked at whether participation in decision making was linked to student learning via changes in curriculum and instruction. David focused on the impact of state legislated SBDM councils on student performance. In the second year of the study, David reported no "clear linkage between council [SBDM] actions and issues of teaching and learning" (p. 6). Weiss and Cambone (1994) substantiated these findings in their five year longitudinal study of 12 public high schools, with SBDM in six of 12 schools. They found that SBDM was not a sufficient condition to significantly produce instructional reform. Wohlstetter, Smyer, and Mohrman (1994) found a similar pattern in their study of 24 schools. They noted that the existence of school councils did "not automatically lead to their application to improve teaching and learning" (p. 282).

One of the few large sample studies, conducted by Taylor and Bogotch (1994), examined the statistical relationship between SBDM and student achievement, again finding no relationship. Their study was conducted in a large, diverse metropolitan

district. Thirty-three schools were sampled, sixteen from the pilot schools involved in the restructuring program; and, seventeen nonpiloted schools that matched the pilot schools on organizational features such "as level, size, and the percentage of free lunch participants" (p. 307). Using the mathematics scores from the Stanford Achievement Test they found no statistically significant difference in student achievement between schools with teacher participation and schools without teacher participation. In and of itself, SBDM did not produce increases in student achievement.

In contrast, Smylie, Lazarus, and Brownlee-Conyers (1995) found that several features of SBDM interact and were related to student learning. This they argued indicated a relationship between SBDM and student learning. Information from survey data, observations of building council and faculty meetings, and student learning as measured on standardized tests were collected in a Midwestern metropolitan K-8 school district. Their findings linked teacher participation in school councils to improved instruction and, subsequently, student learning. They found that levels of autonomy declined while levels of accountability increased, perhaps by replacing individual discretion with collegial controls and by the development and exercise of collective autonomy (p. 10). Thus, it is possible for SBDM to have a positive relationship to student learning, but interactions of school features are complex and often indirect.

Wohlstetter and Odden (1991) also found councils to be inattentive to the issues of student learning, indicating councils need school leadership that advances educational changes focused on teaching and learning. Robertson, Wohlstetter, & Mohrman (1994) reinforce the importance of focusing on teaching and student learning when implementing SBDM. They found a strong intercorrelation between information, instructional guidance and leadership factors, as well as other supportive factors thought to promote the implementation of curriculum and instructional reforms.

It is clear from the findings that SBDM alone is not a sufficient condition for the purpose of instructional reform. Rather, this reform seems to be successful when there is a continuous and active focus on student learning helping SBDM councils focus on issues of instruction and learning as well as school conditions that support teachers involvement in the improvement of instruction.

In sum, schools are complex organizations. The structures, processes and cultural features of the school may have differential impact on SBDM and, thus, be

related to differential influence on instructional quality and student learning. In this study, we will be examining a number of these relationships.

Conceptual Framework

This research studies schools from an organizational perspective. As such, we will examine the ways schools vary on important features such as size, complexity, gender composition, goal consensus, leadership, and the distribution of power (see Mintzberg, 1979 for reviews of this literature). We will note the relationships of these features to teacher sense of empowerment and professional community. In many other studies these features have been found to influence the variation of key structures and processes in organizations. Few studies have examined the relationship between these features and the ways governance and decision making structures vary. Few have studied in significantly restructuring schools the ways SBDM is related to central organizational features (Murphy and Beck, 1995).

This study will use this perspective to garner an initial picture of these complex relationships with particular attention to the mix of features found in schools with high quality instruction and student learning. Further research, no doubt, will use other perspectives to understand SBDM in schools and expand our understanding of this phenomena.

Study Design and Methodology

Overall Design

The OERI Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools (CORS) collected data from 24 schools to examine the organizational features of restructured schools and the interrelationships of on various aspects of pedagogy, empowerment and professional community on teachers, principals, and students. These 24 public schools (8 elementary, 8 middle, and 8 high schools) were selected after extensive search for highly restructured schools, interviews with the school personnel, and site visits. The study sought schools that were restructuring in a variety of areas, had been restructuring for two or more years, and who served a diverse population.

These multiple approaches helped verify the findings and raise important new issues about the ways SBDM and school organizational characteristics are related to empowerment, sense of community, student achievement and other features of school organization.

Sample

To investigate how school organizational features influence the quality of pedagogy among teachers and academic performance among students, the Center on the Organization and Restructuring of Schools undertook an in-depth study of 24 public elementary, middle, and high schools (8 schools at each grade level) (Newmann & Associates, 1995). The 24 schools, identified through a national search, are spread across 16 states and 22 school districts (Berends & King, 1992). Important criteria for their selection into the study included being well along in the process of restructuring in such areas as student experiences, the professional lives of teachers, and the leadership, management, and governance of schools (Newmann, 1991).

Data Collection and Analysis

The Center staff developed a multi-method design for this five-year study, incorporating a battery of quantitative and qualitative data-gathering instruments. A representative from each sampled school, usually a member of the administrative staff, compiled a *school profile* containing information on such school characteristics as enrollment, the racial and ethnic composition of the student body and faculty, staffing patterns, and the extent of participation in federally funded categorical programs. More than 900 teachers, 82 percent of the study population, completed *questionnaires* about their instructional practices and professional activities, the school culture, and their personal and professional backgrounds. The completion rate for the teacher surveys is 95 percent.

A three-person team of Center researchers visited each participating school for two weeks, one week during the fall and one week in the spring, to observe instruction; to interview teachers, administrators, and a sampling of other school stakeholders (averaging between 25-35 interviews at each sampled school); and, as much as possible, to experience the "life" of the school, including such regular activities as meetings of the faculty, governance councils, and other groups.

The Center focused intensively on six "core" teachers at each school (three mathematics and three social studies teachers) for a total of 144 teachers at the 24 restructuring schools. The pedagogical practice of these teachers received extensive scrutiny through observations of their instruction and evaluation of their assessment tasks. Center researchers *observed instruction* in each core class four times (twice in the fall and twice in the spring), evaluating it according to standards of intellectual quality -- namely, construction of knowledge, disciplined inquiry, and value beyond the classroom (Newmann, Secada & Wehlage, 1995). This was the source of data on

teachers' quality of instruction.

Core classroom teachers also provided the Center with two assessment tasks (one from the fall and one from the spring) and two samples of student work produced in response to each of the tasks. Center researchers who were specialists in either mathematics or social studies and practicing public school teachers, trained to apply the standards of intellectual quality, rated the *assessment tasks*. Teams of public school teachers also scored the *student work* according to these standards.

Center researchers conducted *interviews* with each core teacher twice during the year about their instructional practice and work life. In addition to the core teachers, Center researchers interviewed representative teachers (identified by the principal) twice during the school year. They also interviewed and observed nominated teachers (identified by their peers as exceptional teachers) twice during the study year. During their two weeks at each school site, center researchers observed a number of governance and professional meetings that took place, and they collected and analyzed written *documentation* pertaining to the school's restructuring efforts.

Each school research team prepared an extensive case study for the school the team visited, summarizing and synthesizing the interview, observation, and documentary data. All 24 *case studies*, typically 150-200 single-spaced pages in length, followed an identical topic outline. After other Center staff members read and thoroughly critiqued these documents, the research team revised them. In order to facilitate easy retrieval of cases that illuminate analytic issues, members of each research team *coded the respective case study*. The researchers coded the cases separately; and, if they disagreed on a coding, they discussed the matter until they arrived at a consensus. This study draws from all of these data.

Instrumentation and Measures

The analyses for this study incorporate measures constructed from data contained in multiple sources: school profiles, teacher surveys, pedagogical ratings (i.e., evaluations of teachers' instruction and assessment task ratings), student achievement scores, the case studies, and the coding reports. Descriptions of most of the measures follow.

Governance structures and power relations. (1) *Governance structures*. We reviewed the case studies to identify the structures and processes that each

school used to enact site-based decision making. We determined whether jurisdiction extended to budget, curriculum, and/or personnel; whether decisions were made by consensus, vote, or some other means; and whether the principal could exercise veto power. (2) *Power relations*. The Center researchers who visited the school coded the exercise of power at the school according to two main categories: (a) consolidated or (b) shared power relations. Consolidated power rested either solely with the principal or with a small group that could include the principal, other administrators, and/or a coterie of teachers. Shared power also took two forms: (a) power shared among the schools' teachers as a whole (with a principal either non-existent or exercising little or no influence) or (b) power shared among the schools' teachers and the principal. Thus, the measure of power relations is a fourfold classification.

Demographic and organizational characteristics. Whether the influence relationships in SBDM schools are associated with varying school demographic and organizational characteristics is a central question of this investigation. In addition to grade level, we examined schools along six dimensions: size, staffing complexity, gender composition -- (demographic measures derived from the school profiles); and (4) goal consensus, (5) teacher empowerment, and (6) professional community -- (organizational measures constructed from teacher survey responses and aggregated to the school level).

School size represents the number of students enrolled in the school during the year of the study. *Staffing complexity* is a construct comprising four measures, each defined as a proportion of different types of staff in relation to the number of full-time faculty: the number of faculty teaching non-academic subjects, the number of assistant principals, the number of guidance counselors, and the number of non-teaching professional staff. *Gender composition* represents the proportion of the faculty who are female.

Goal consensus taps the agreement among the faculty regarding the importance of such goals as: mastery of basic literary skills, academic excellence, higher level skills, citizenship, good work habits, personal growth and fulfillment, and human relations skills. Goal consensus is measured by Kendall's coefficient of concordance.

Teacher empowerment is an index of teachers' self-reported, perceived influence in four domains: school policy, teacher worklife, student experiences, and classroom control (Marks & Louis, 1995). Each teacher empowerment domain is a composite variable. School policy comprises six areas: budget, in-service programs, specific

professional and teaching assignments, schedule, curriculum, and hiring. Teacher experiences incorporates two measures: the extent to which the respondent reported an influence on school decisions which directly affect him or her; and the extent to which the school staff are involved in the decisions that affect themselves. Student experiences includes the extent to which teachers perceive some influence over student behavior codes, have control over the discipline of the students they teach, and set policy for ability grouping. Classroom control measures the extent to which teachers may exercise discretion in the areas of textbook selection, the content and skills to be taught, and teaching techniques.

Professional community. The professional community variable is an index comprises five composite measures: shared sense of purpose, collaborative activity, collective focus on student learning, deprivatized practice, and reflective dialogue. Shared sense of purpose reflects the faculty's shared conviction about what the central mission of the school should be, their sense that school goals and priorities are clear, and their agreement with the administration on discipline policy. Collaborative activity measures the extent to which teaching colleagues make useful suggestions about curriculum materials, teaching techniques, and student activities; cooperate; coordinate content of courses; and meet to work together on instruction. Collective focus on student learning measures teacher emphasis on students' acquiring higher order skills and students' learning rather than their own teaching; and the research team's judgment on the extent to which the faculty demonstrated a focused commitment to authentic curriculum and instruction, and a focused vision for student learning. Deprivatized practice represents the extent to which teachers experience peer review of students' performance, collegial observation of teaching, and meaningful feedback from peers or superiors on teaching performance. Reflective dialogue includes the amount of time teachers spend together diagnosing individual student needs and analyzing each other's teaching.

Principal leadership. Four single items characterize aspects of principal leadership as perceived by the teaching staff including the extent to which the principal attends to student academic performance; supports and encourages teachers; respects teachers; and supports the school's restructuring efforts. Each item is aggregated to the school level.

Analytic Approaches

The analyses undertaken for this study are primarily descriptive, employing a

combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques. Examining school governance structures, power relations, school organization, and principal leadership in the 24 SBDM restructuring schools, we portray their interrelationships. To facilitate comparisons of these relationships, we standardized all continuous variables.

To examine how SBDM works at each school, we analyzed each of the 24 case studies to identify the governance structures and processes operative in the schools. Comparing the schools along these dimensions of governance, we examined the extent of their variation. We employed a 24 x 4 matrix to classify the types of school governance structures according to the power relations found in each school.

To determine the extent to which features of school organization such as size, staffing complexity, gender composition, goal consensus, teacher empowerment, and professional community, are associated with different power relations, we employed oneway analysis of variance (ANOVA). We displayed and compared the means for the two main categories of power relations categories, consolidated (either in the principal or in a small group including the principal) and shared (either among teachers or among the principal and teachers).

Focusing on principal leadership characteristics and the two school organizational features with a clear, strong relationship to pedagogical quality and student academic performance -- teacher empowerment and professional community (Louis and Marks, 1996; Marks and Louis, 1995), we employed a correlational analysis to examine their interrelationship. Next, because shared power relations have proven to be associated with pedagogical quality and student achievement (King, Louis, Marks & Peterson, 1995), we examined the extent to which these leadership behaviors typify each category of school power relations. To do this, we employ oneway analysis of variance (ANOVA)

FINDINGS

Introduction

Although all of the restructuring schools in our sample are SBDM schools, they vary significantly in such school organizational features as teacher empowerment, professional community, power relations, goal consensus, and principal leadership, . These organizational features are interrelated, coexisting at relatively high levels in some schools and almost absent in others. The findings point to important interrelationships between organizational features as well as a set of features found

in SBDM schools that had both high quality authentic instruction and higher student learning.

Several important findings about SBDM in restructuring schools were immediately evident.

Structures and Processes of SBDM

The schools in this study all had some form of SBDM. We found evidence of various structures and features of decentralized decision making in all the schools. Most shared the same type of decentralized decision making structures (Table 1). All schools had established governance structures in the form of school-wide councils and committees or "task forces," as seen in Table 1.

[Insert Table 1 here]

In the 24 schools, three major arenas of decision making are usually devolved to the school site. In these schools, the district has (1) devolved decision making over the budget (primarily non-salary funds), (2) granted increased discretion over curriculum content (even with a state curriculum, schools reported they did not feel it constrained them) and instructional practices, and (3) provided some discretion over staffing and hiring. In practice, there is variability in the amount of discretion each school enjoys, depending on the nature of the budget allocation, the teacher contract and so forth. Nonetheless, these schools were granted more autonomy than one often finds in traditional American schools.

Schools in the study included a wide group of stakeholders in decision making groups. Schools involve staff and most involve parents. High schools are likely, but not consistently, to include students on school councils.

Being on the council, though, is not the same as having power. As we shall see later, while formal structures may exist for governance, the actual enactment of power may vary, with various individuals or groups either holding considerable influence (consolidated power) or individuals and groups sharing power amongst themselves (shared power). Nonetheless, the structures are common across most of the schools.

Organizational Structures and School Characteristics

The nature of the schools may have an impact on the relationship between SBDM and both intermediate conditions (for example, sense of empowerment and professional community) as well as key outcomes of schools (eg. quality instruction

and student learning).

School Size and Complexity. It has long been known that features of organizations can influence structures, actions, and attitudes. Two such features, the size and the complexity of the organization, have been found to increase the uncertainty of actions and have generally been found to be related to variation in structures, processes, and outcomes (Mintzberg, 1979). For example, we might expect decision making structures to vary with increasing school size and increasing school complexity as schools shape governance in order to cope with larger numbers of staff and more complex units. In fact, we did not find a systematic relationship for these features of schools.

In this sample, large school size is also not systematically related to teacher sense of empowerment or variation in SBDM structures (Table 2). This is somewhat surprising as both increased school size and greater school complexity may make decision making more difficult and uncertain. It may be that other school conditions, such as leadership, sense of community, and goal consensus may overcome problems of size. As we will see shortly, size may have some impact on the nature of power relations in the school. In sum, neither school size nor school complexity were significantly related to variation in SBDM.

Sense of Empowerment and Professional Community

When teachers feel more empowered, having opportunities to share power in the school, and work together to improve their school, we might expect their sense of professional community to increase. In this study, teachers' sense of empowerment is related to professional community. Specifically, teacher influence on decision making had a strong relationship to their sense of professional community (correlation, r=.70, P <.01). While it is not possible to determine the direction of influence or to demonstrate causality, these two features are clearly related; the qualitative data support these observations as well. It may be that a professional community cannot develop without teachers having some influence over decisions, or, alternately, that professional community develops and expands a teacher's sense of empowerment. Larger sample studies should examine out these relationships in more detail.

Goal Consensus, Empowerment and Professional Community

While many features of schools with SBDM have been studied, few studies

have looked at the relationship between empowerment and goal consensus. Goal consensus may be important to fostering a sense of empowerment, because SBDM requires increased teacher collaboration, time spent on decision making, and significant decisions about the use of resources. Low goal consensus could make these processes problematic and conflictual, thus decreasing teachers' sense of community and empowerment as disagreement, fragmentation and balkanization increase (Fullan, 1990).

The data point to a statistically significant relationship between goal consensus and both empowerment and professional community. Specifically, there is a small, but consistent relationship: as goal consensus increases, sense of empowerment and professional community increase. Again, it may be that goal consensus combined with SBDM increases the degree of empowerment as well as the strength of the professional community. This combination, evident in later analyses, is found in schools with more authentic pedagogy and higher student learning. The correlation between professional community and instructional quality is statistically significant (correlation r=.66), while sense of empowerment is only weakly correlated. But not all schools with strong professional communities have more authentic instruction and student learning. It seems reasonable to assume that these professional communities will promote the type of instruction they consider "best"--which could be any type of instruction.

It appears that empowerment of teachers may be a necessary, but not sufficient condition for instructional quality. Teacher empowerment was weakly correlated to instructional quality (r=.32) (Table 2). However, without a reasonable level of teacher empowerment, high instructional quality seldom occurred; specifically, we did not find schools with high quality pedagogy where teachers felt disempowered. But, it did not generally guarantee it either; when teachers were empowered (i.e., exercised influence on decision making), staff did not always score high on instructional quality measures.

[Insert Table 2 here]

Principal Leadership

Most studies have found principals important in schools (see Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, and Lee, 1982; Deal and Peterson, 1990; Guskey and Peterson, 1995). But does principal leadership continue to be important to success in SBDM schools? To what extent is principal leadership behavior related to teacher empowerment and professional community, as well as goal consensus and varying power relations? We

examined four dimensions of principal leadership: attentiveness to student learning, support and encouragement of teachers, respect for teachers, and support for the school's restructuring efforts. We consistently found positive relationships between principal leadership and three school organizational properties-- goal consensus, teacher empowerment, and professional community (Table 3).

Keeping in mind that these organizational properties proved most characteristic of schools where power is shared (Figure 1), we compared the relative salience of principal leadership across the four categories of power relations. In schools where power is consolidated, principal leadership proved to be rated consistently below average, especially where the power is in the hands of a small group (Figure 1).

Principal leadership was particularly strong in schools with shared power, especially where it is shared with the principal. But differences appear among schools in the two shared-power categories. Where power is shared among teachers and the principal, principals are rated from .5 SD to .8 SD above the mean on all four leadership characteristics.

[Insert Figure 1 here]

In contrast, where there is power shared only among staff, teachers perceive principals less positively and sometimes negatively. Although these principals rank above the sample mean on attentiveness to student learning and respect for their teachers, they rank quite low -- especially compared to their counterparts who share power with their faculties -- on supporting and encouraging their teachers and supporting school restructuring, -.3 SD and -.6 SD respectively. In these schools, both the quality of instruction and the level of student learning were lower than in schools where power was shared with principals.

While it is not possible to determine the direction of causality, it may be that principals who lead are more likely to share power with their staffs. The qualitative data show a number of principals in this group who are strong leaders, but who also have encouraged significant leadership on the part of staff. Additionally, shared power and principal leadership seem a potent combination in schools, especially where there are shared goals and a professional community as we see in the schools where we found higher quality instruction and greater student learning.

Organization Features and School Power Relations

Schools in this study had similar SBDM structures, but as we looked more

closely, they varied considerably on the ways power was distributed in the school. We will turn first to the variation of power relations in the sample of schools, factors associated with variation, then look at the features found in more successful schools.

Variation in Power Relations. Although school demographic characteristics do not significantly differentiate the four power relations groups, two patterns did emerge (Table 4). Power in high schools is most likely to be consolidated in the principal; this is least likely in elementary schools. Power shared among teachers solely is most common in elementary schools, but was not found at all in the high schools (at least in this sample). These differences may produce important variation in the social features of the schools.

[Insert Table 4 here]

School size and complexity seems somewhat important to variation in power relations. When the schools were comparatively large, power more often rests with the principal, .4 SD above the sample mean. When the schools are comparatively small power more often rests with the teachers, almost .4 SD below the sample mean. When power is consolidated in the hands of a small group, school size varied considerably (SD=1.4). For example, the largest school in this category is a high school enrolling more than 2200 students; the smallest is a middle school, enrolling fewer than 250 students. Staffing also tends to be most complex in schools with consolidated power relations; least complex in schools where power is shared. Here, the size of the current sample must be considered in interpreting these findings.

Gender composition corresponds to variability in power relations. In schools where teachers share power among themselves, the concentration of female teachers is greatest, more than .65 SD above the sample average. Where power is centered in a small group, schools have fewer female teachers, close to .4 SD below the sample average. In short, schools with women faculties are more likely to have shared power relations.

Power relations in successful schools were usually shared. Of the four types of power relations-- consolidated in the principal/consolidated in the teacher or shared among teachers/shared among teachers and administrators-- shared power relations among teachers and administrators were more often found in schools with high quality instruction and higher student learning. But other characteristics seemed to occur in these schools as well.

Goal consensus occurred more often when teachers shared power among themselves, .8 SD above the sample mean, or when they shared power with their

principals, almost .6 SD above the mean ($P \leq .05$). Where power is consolidated in the principal or a small group, goal consensus tends to be low.

Teachers' sense of empowerment was higher under shared power arrangements with the principal or among teachers, .8 SD and .7 SD above the mean, respectively. Teachers experience least empowerment when the principal possesses consolidated power, -.9 SD below the mean ($P \leq .01$).

Professional community is reported strongest where power is shared, especially among principal and teachers, .8 SD above the mean. Professional community is reported at its lowest levels where power is consolidated, especially in the principal, -.7 SD below the mean ($P \leq .01$).

The distribution of these features become evident as we examine them graphically by the four types of power relations (Figure 2). The bar chart highlights several complex, yet important patterns.

[Insert Figure 2 here]

First, goal consensus is higher (by about .25 SD) where teachers share power only among themselves, compared with shared power that includes the principal. Second, in contrast, professional community is greater (.3 SD) when the principal and teachers share power. Third, the data suggest that school gender composition is independent of the high levels of goal consensus, empowerment, and professional community when the two shared-power categories are compared.

Fourth, while school size is not consistently related to the organizational characteristics, staffing complexity is related to goal consensus, professional community, and empowerment. Greater staffing complexity decreases the likelihood that these positive organizational features are in evidence. Where staffing is less complex, goal consensus, teacher empowerment, and professional community are comparatively high.

Overall in this study, we find that goal consensus, teacher sense of empowerment and professional community are all significantly higher in schools with some form of shared power arrangement. Where power is consolidated, these conditions are lower. But how do these relate to quality instruction and student learning?

High Quality Learning Environments and School Features

When we turn to the distribution of authentic pedagogy and student achievement by power relations we see a clear pattern: schools with shared power

relations among staff and administrators have significantly higher scores on authentic instruction and student learning (Figure 3). These schools are highly positive both in terms of authentic pedagogy (.7 SD above the sample mean) and student academic performance (.8 SD above the sample mean).

[Insert Figure 3 here]

The data suggest that in some schools positive principal leadership, goal consensus, teacher empowerment, professional community and shared power relations coalesce into a positive professional environments. The nature of the data make it impossible to prove causality, but the conceptual connections between these features suggest they may work in these ways.

It seems reasonable to assume that a governance tool like SBDM alone will not promote quality instruction or learning. But where this form of governance is enhanced through principal leadership, goal consensus, teacher empowerment, professional community and shared power relations then restructuring may be more successful.

No doubt complex processes are at work in these schools, processes that current data cannot completely disentangle. Nonetheless, it is plausible that the existence of shared decision making structures (SBDM) foster collaboration that may increase goal consensus through dialogue, foster a sense of empowerment through the enactment of real authority, and promote a professional community as teachers and administrators share power and work formally and informally on important issues of practice. When positive principal leadership also occurs within shared power relations, we may find staff becoming leaders (as the qualitative data suggest) and focusing on both improving instruction and increasing student learning.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In summary, several important findings about SBDM in restructuring schools were immediately evident. First, when schools choose to restructure, one of the most prevalent changes is the establishment of new, decentralized governance structures. These often consist of several common features, including: school level councils, a mix of participants such as teachers, parents and sometimes students, new arenas for decision making, increased discretion over budget, curriculum and personnel.

Second, while the structures of SBDM implemented in these schools vary minimally, there is considerable variation in intermediate conditions such as teacher sense of empowerment and professional community.

Third, SBDM alone is not associated with variation in instructional quality or student learning using measures of authentic pedagogy and learning. Thus, while there is little variation in the structure of SBDM, there is variation in the instructional environment and student achievement that is not accounted for by variations in the characteristics of the students. Other features of more successful schools may be supporting the development of quality instruction and student learning.

Fourth, SBDM alone does not seem to be a sufficient change to foster quality instruction and student learning. This reform may need to occur within the context of several organizational features. Several features tend to coalesce in more successful schools: positive principal leadership, shared power relations among teachers and principals, and a strong organization characterized by goal consensus, teacher sense of empowerment, and professional community. When they do, high instructional quality and authentic student achievement typify the educational environment of the school.

SBDM is a complex and demanding approach to restructuring schools. For it to have an impact on the quality of instruction and student learning, policymakers and educators may wish to consider the complex interactions of the various school features we found in this study.

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March 21, 1996

Table 1

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES & PROCESSES IN RESTRUCTURED SCHOOLS

LEVEL	ELEMENTARY								MIDDLE SCHOOL								HIGH SCHOOL							
SCHOOLS	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P[1]	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
FORMAL STRUCTURES																								
School Council	X	X	X	X	X	X	X[2]	X (2)	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X[3]	X	X	X	X	X
Committees	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
Faculty Meetings	X	X		X	?			X	X	X		X	X		X		X	X			X	X		X
DECISION MAKERS																								
School Council	Pr Ap T	P[4],T	Pr T,P C,*	Pr T,P C,*	Pr T,P C,*	T,P C		Pr T,P [5]	Pr T,P S	P[4] T	Pr AP DA T,P	Pr T,P S,*		Pr AP T,P C,*	Pr T,P S,*	A,T [6,7]	Pr T,P C,S	P (T)	A,T P,S *	A,T P,S *	A,T *	A,T	A T?	A,T P
Commitees	Pr T	T		Pr T,P *	Pr T		Pr T	P,T	?	?		Pr T,P S	Pr T	Pr T	T	?			A,T P,S *	A,T P,S *		A,T		
DECISION AREAS	C,B	C,B P	C,B P	C,B P	C,B P	C,B P	C,B	C,B[8]	C,B P	C,B P	C,B P	C,B P	C P[10]	C B[9] P	C B[11] P	C,B	C,B	B[9]	C,B[9] ,P[9]	C,B ,P,	C,B ,P	C,B ,P	C	C
DECISION PROCESS	O	V		C/V	C/V	C	V	V?C	V	O	V	C/V	C/V	V	C	?	C	O	C	V&C	V	C/V	O	C
POWER RELATIONS	ST	ST	STA	ST	CP	CSG	CSG	STA	ST	CSG	CP	STA	STA CP?	CP	STA	CSG	CP	CP	CSG	STA	CSG CP?	STA	CP	CP

1 School was in a transition year, much of information gathered reflected a proposed plan, not yet fully operationalized
2 Central Committee functions somewhat as a School Council
3 Planning/Restructuring Committee functions somewhat as a School Council
4 Non-voting members
5 School Board Representative
6 Parents exert power informally
7 Parents are suppose to participate, but Sch Bd blocks their participation
8 School Restructuring Team, has no real power
9 Principal controls
10 Faculty make recommendations Supt ignores.
11 Grant funds only

The above table indicates the formalized governance arrangements. Actual processes do not necessarily follow the formalized arrangements.

DECISION MAKERS:

Pr = Principal
AP = Assistant Principal
A = Administrator
T = Teachers
P = Parents
C = Community
S = Students
* = Support Staff/Classified representatives
DA= District Administrator

DECISION AREAS:

C = Curriculum
B = Budget
P = Personnel

DECISION PROCESS:

V = Voting
C = Consensus
O = Other
C/V = Primarily Consensus, Voting if needed

POWER RELATIONS:

CP = Consolidated Principal Power
CSG = Consolidated Small Group Power
ST = Power Shared among Teachers
STA = Power Shared by Teachers and Administrators

Table 2
Selected School Organizational Characteristics: Correlations

	Organizational Complexity	Instructional Quality	Professional Community	Goal Consensus	Meeting Time	Size
Empowerment Index	-.49*	.32	.70**	.70**	.44*	-.37
Organizational Complexity		-.44*	-.46*	-.54	.29	.27
Instructional Quality			.66**	.42*	.23	-.08
Professional Community				.52**	.36	-.24
Goal Consensus					.42*	-.54**
Meeting Time						-.14

* P < .05 ** P < .01

Table 3

Principal Leadership and School Organizational Characteristics: Correlations

	Encourages Teachers	Respects Teachers	Supports Restructuring	Goal Consensus	Teacher Empowerment	Professional Community
Attentive to Student Learning	.65**	.64**	.41*	.38	.23	.31
Encourages Teachers		.83**	.70**	.31	.49*	.53**
Respects Teachers			.53**	.47*	.52**	.58**
Supports Restructuring				.26	.43*	.49*
Goal Consensus					.70**	.52**
Teacher Empowerment						.70**

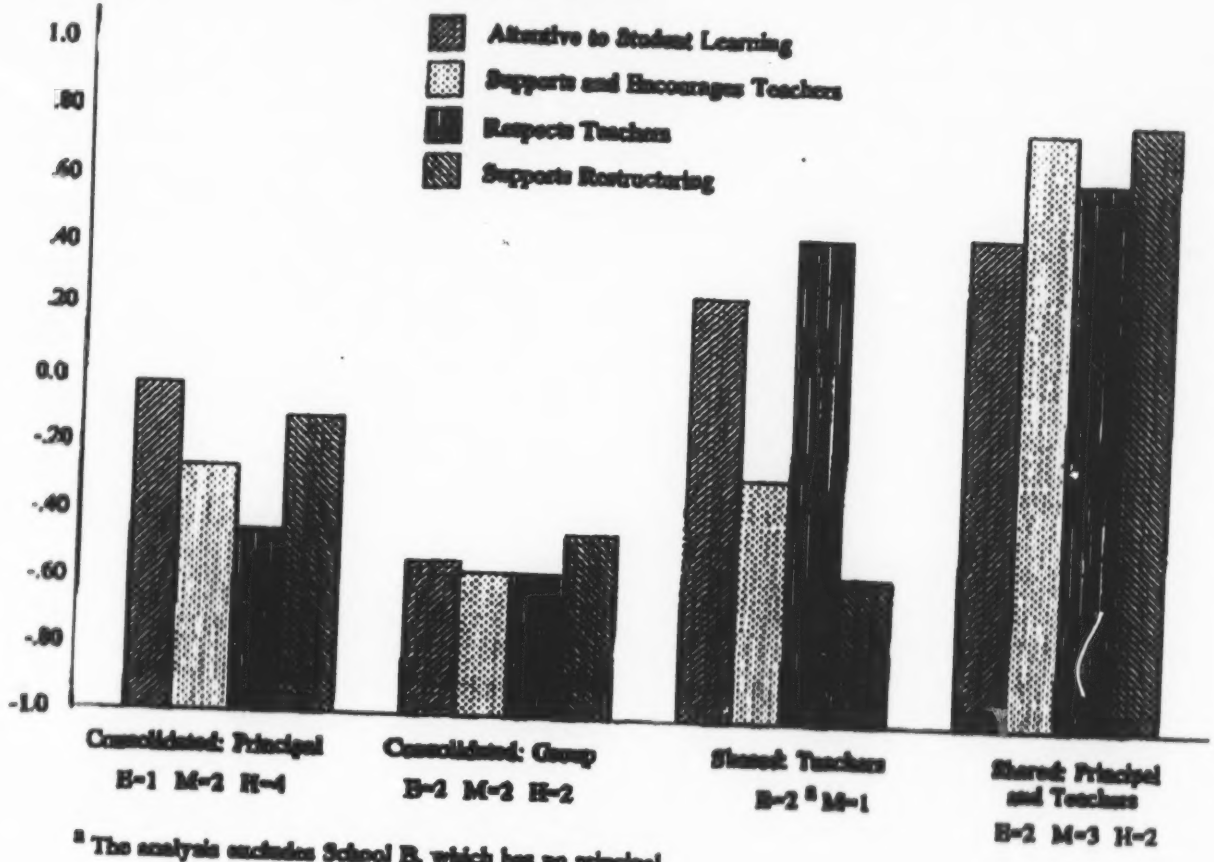
* $P \leq .05$ ** $P \leq .01$

Table 4
School Organizational Characteristics and Power Relations

Characteristics	Consolidated Principal (N=7)	Consolidated Group (N=6)	Shared Teachers (N=4)	Shared Principal/Tchrs (N=7)
Grade Level[a]				
Elementary	1	2	3	2
Middle	2	2	1	3
High	4	2	0	2
Size[b]	.40 (.98)	-.08 (1.4)	-.38 (.52)	-.12 (.86)
Staffing Complexity[b]	.09 (.77)	.26 (1.5)	-.16 (.45)	-.21 (1.1)
Gender Composition[b] (% Female Faculty)	-.12 (.96)	-.38 (.80)	.65 (.66)	.08 (1.3)
Goal Consensus[b]	-.53 (.55)	-.57 (.60)	.80* (.80)	.56 (1.2)
Teacher Empowerment[b]	-.91 (.94)	-.28 (.55)	.69 (.31)	.76** (.79)
Professional Community[b]	-.70 (.58)	-.49 (.80)	.53 (.86)	.82** (.90)

* $P \leq .05$ **$P \leq .01$
[a] Significance tested using contingency table analysis.
[b] Standardized measure, M=0, SD=1.0.

Figure 1: Principal Attributes and Behaviors by School Power Relations



[a] The analysis excludes School B, which has no principal.

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Figure 2: School Demographic and Organizational Characteristics by School Power Relations

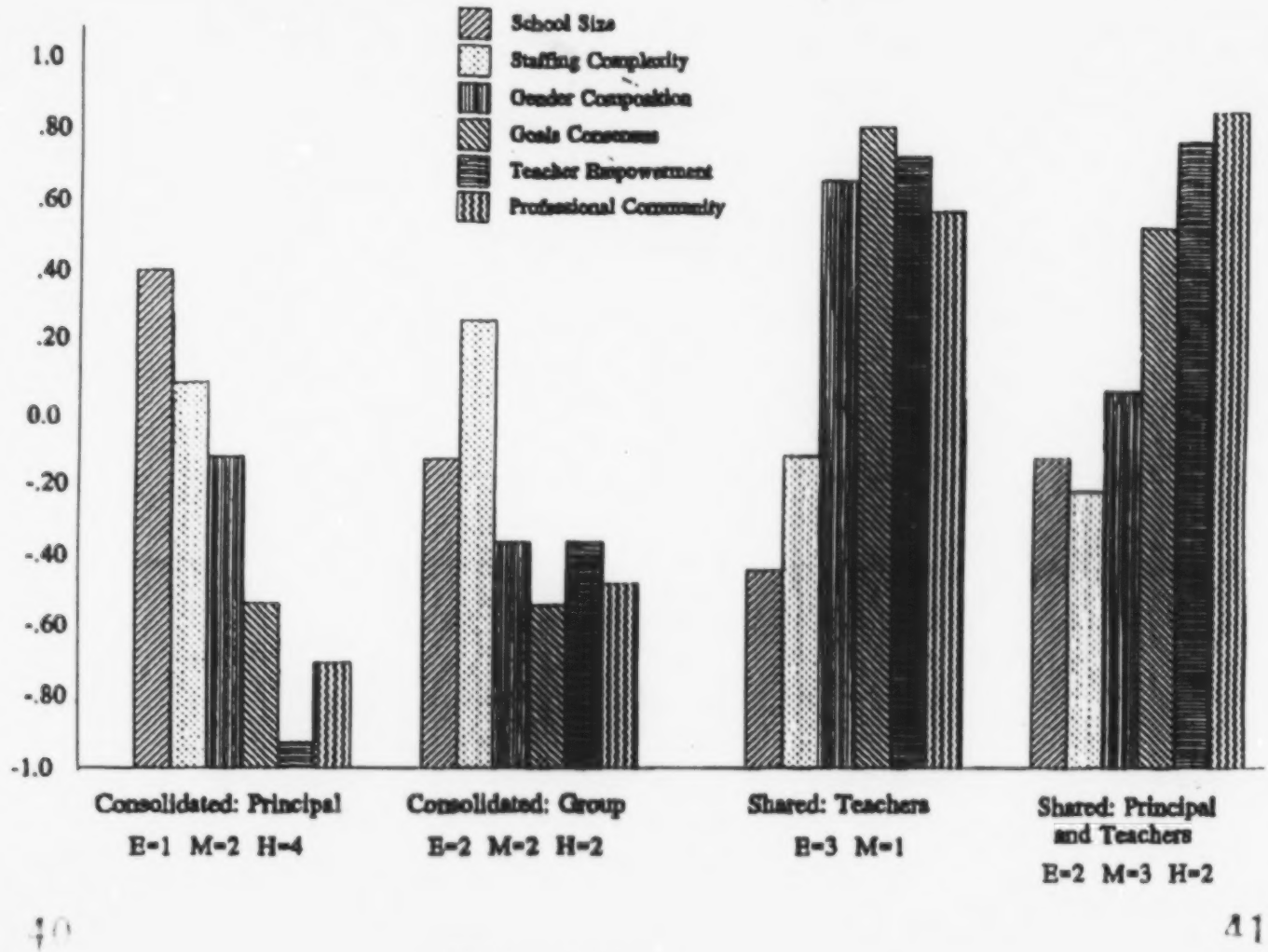

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Figure 3: Distribution of Authentic Pedagogy and Student Achievement by School Power Relations